

VZCZCXRO4677

PP RUEHAG RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHNEH RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHSL

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DE RUEHAA #1391 3031258

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 301258Z OCT 09

FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3675

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE

RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5829

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3537

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3399

RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 4071

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 4039

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1225

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001391

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN; MED

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/09/2019

TAGS: AMED KFLU PGOV SOCI TX

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: REPORTS OF DEATHS CAUSED BY FLU

REF: ASHGABAT 1370

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Sylvia Reed Curran. Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (SBU) Cases of the flu, probably H1N1, are still widespread in Turkmenistan and Embassy local employees have heard about several deaths. A lawyer from the local government of the area where many embassy employees live, who was reportedly around 30 years old, died the last week in October. In addition, the 17 year-old neighbor of a local employee died from the flu, and there are reports of deaths of other children, including one who attended the Turkish-Turkmen school.

¶2. (SBU) Lines at hospitals and pharmacies are unusually long, even late at night, and ambulances are reportedly receiving twice the usual number of calls. On the positive side, pharmacies are now stocking face masks, and there are no reports of any pharmacies running out of supplies of medicine.

¶3. (C) The flu also seems to be making the rounds of the diplomatic community. The Uzbek defense attach missed some of the Turkmen Independence Day events because he was sick, and a Turkish diplomat left the Turkish national day celebration on October 29 early because she was unwell. Even among the diplomatic community, information about how to treat or prevent the spread of the disease is limited. DATT overheard someone telling the sick Turkish diplomat that what she really needed was hot soup.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: The Turkmen Government's unwillingness to publish information about H1N1 is one of the major complicating factors for the citizens trying to cope. Conversations with local employees show that they can receive either useful information or terrible information, depending on the doctor who treats them. One employee said that the school her son attended was requiring sick children to have a doctor's note saying they are healthy before they could return to class. But other employees have said that their

local schools are not providing any information, not even  
telling children to stay home if they are feeling sick. END  
COMMENT.  
CURRAN